

# *Virginia Child Support Enforcement Program*

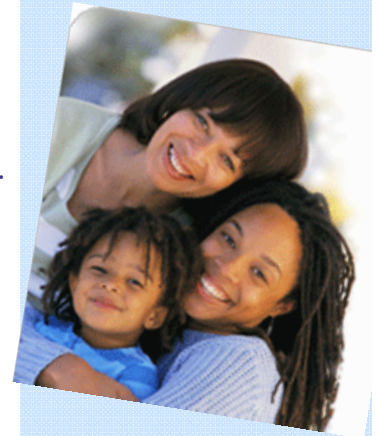
## *~ 2008 Fact Sheet ~*

### *Program Highlights ~*

- The Division of Child Support Enforcement (DCSE) collected a record \$629 million in SFY08, a 3.4% increase over the previous year.
- Virginia's Child Support Enforcement caseload includes 359,000 cases and 441,000 children. These children represent almost one-quarter of Virginia's child population and are owed \$2.5 billion in past due child support.
- Since it was initiated in 1995, the Virginia Drivers License Suspension Program has resulted in collections of \$332 million in delinquent child support, with more than 4,200 licenses suspended.
- Virginia collected \$7.01 for every dollar spent in FFY07, which exceeds the maximum federal cost effectiveness goal of \$5.00 by \$2.01. Virginia's Child Support Enforcement Program is the sixth most cost-effective program in the nation.
- Virginia was one of the first two states in the Nation to receive unconditional federal certification of its automated child support system.

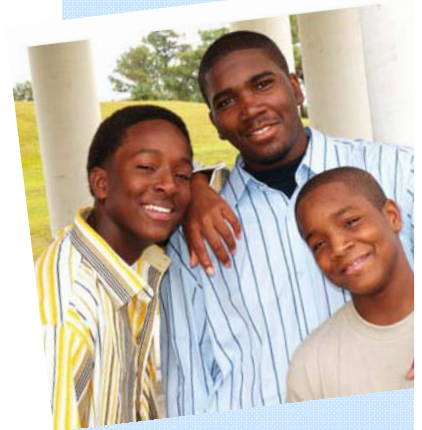
### *• Operations~*

- In support of the preceding item, Virginia's Child Support State Disbursement Unit (SDU), administered by the Department's Division of Finance under the program oversight and funding of DCSE, uses a modernized Payment Processing operation named SMILE (Support Money Impacts Lives Everyday). SMILE'S state-of-the-art technology and equipment allows Virginia's child support payments to be imaged, encoded, and stored with such efficiency that work time is reduced; a 48-hour turnaround time is continuously met; receipts are deposited the same day; and child support staff outside of the SDU have the ability to independently research payments received and print copies if needed. On average, over 10,000 financial instruments, e.g., checks or money orders, are imaged and over \$1.2 million dollars pass through SMILE per day. Virginia's SDU consistently ranks nationally among the top of the Nation's child support state disbursement units.



# *Virginia Child Support Enforcement Program*

- Virginia's continuous attention to its undistributed collections achieved a balance of 1.8% in July 2008, a figure that varies slightly from month to month but remains consistently low. (All states carry legitimate undistributed collections balances stemming from federal tax offsets, future payments, etc.) Virginia is a leader in the Nation in addressing this issue.



## *Innovation ~*

- Innovative methods of payment allow child support to be paid electronically. Noncustodial parents can pay through their bank's on-line bill payment service. Also, payments may be made through any Western Union agent for those parents who may not have bank accounts.
- Virginia has participated in the federal Access and Visitation Grant Program since its inception in 1997. The latest federal grant of \$209,722 has been awarded to five governmental or non-profit organizations as follows: Supreme Court of Virginia's Department of Dispute Resolution Services, Arlington Public Schools' Teenage Parenting Programs, Catholic Charities of Eastern Virginia Child Support Enforcement Program
- Virginia continues to explore new methods of enforcing child support obligations such as membership in the Child Support Lien Network to intercept insurance settlements of delinquent parents and increasing the seizure of assets such as bank accounts.
- As the first state to subpoena cell phone records in order to locate delinquent parents, Virginia is seeking innovative ways to provide child support for the children of the Commonwealth. Over the course of two years, from 2005 - 2007, DCSE issued over 5,000 subpoenas for over 1,000 NCPs. DCSE now conducts quarterly automated data matches with Verizon, AT&T, Sprint/Nextel, and T-Mobile. Twenty percent of the returned responses include new locate information. DCSE Director, Nick Young, is co-chairing an OCSE Cell Phone Work Group whose mission is to develop and implement a national data matching plan to locate delinquent noncustodial parents.



# Virginia Child Support Enforcement Program

•As a direct result of the aforementioned project, as well as DCSEs involvement in the agency's Prisoner Re-entry Subcommittee, legislation was initiated and passed in 2008 to authorize the Department of Social Services to establish Intensive Case Monitoring pilot programs for child support enforcement as an innovative measure to maximize collections and decrease incarceration due to non-payment. Designated judges in Campbell County, Fairfax, Hampton and Spotsylvania County order NCPs, who they deem appropriate, to participate in the ICMP, as an alternative to incarceration. Program caseworkers assist the selected NCPs to secure employment, housing, training and other services needed to overcome the barriers that hinder their ability to pay support. This progressive response to the problem of nonpayment will benefit families and the Commonwealth as NCPs successfully complete the program and begin to pay child support as ordered. The pilot became effective on July 1, 2008, and early results are encouraging.

•The Division has an interactive Web application. This Web page, which provides updated payment and case information to both custodial and noncustodial parents, provides DCSE customers another method, in addition to telephone and office visits, for accessing information. Over 7,000 customers visit the site each day. In addition, DCSE's website provides helpful links to Virginia's New Hire Reporting Center and the Department of Labor and Industry. The Web address is <http://dcse.virginia.gov>. Only a few other states have achieved this enhanced level of customer services.

•DCSE implemented the standardized electronic format for the Order/Notice to Withhold Income for Child Support (ONWI) with the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS). Paper copies of income withholding orders will no longer be sent to DFAS, allowing for faster processing of child support to families and significant savings in postage for DCSE.



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•DCSE has increased its encouragement that customers avail themselves of Direct Deposit. Since September 2001, Virginia's child support electronic disbursement of payments has soared from 36% of total payments to more than 90% and continues to rise. Virginia DCSE continues to use mass mailings and other means to encourage enrollment. The introduction of debit cards for child support payments has dramatically increased the electronic disbursement of payments.



## *Service ~*

•Virginia's privatized Customer Service Call Center has greatly enhanced customers' access to prompt; high-quality information regarding their child support cases. During State Fiscal Year 2008 (July 1, 2007 - June 30, 2008), the Interactive Voice Response System (IVR) that supports the state-of-the-art Call Center answered 6.29 million calls. During the same period, Customer Service Representatives (CSR) answered an additional 1.12 million calls from customers who needed advanced support to resolve their inquiries. The Call Center answered 99.78% of the calls of customers requesting the assistance of a CSR and responded to 91.4% of those calls within 60 seconds of the caller selecting that option. DCSE and its private sector partner YoungWilliams Child Support Services were awarded the Commissioner's 2008 Award for Exemplary Customer Service by the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) for providing unsurpassed customer service to citizens who rely on Virginia to collect child support on behalf of their children.



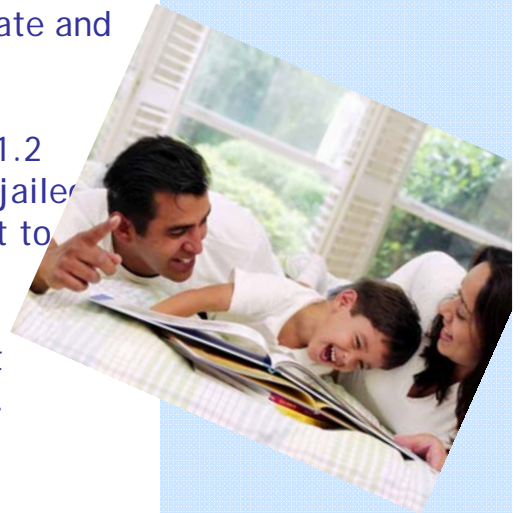
• The Call Center described in the preceding item, transitions from, builds upon, and greatly expands the Child Support Enforcement Program's capacity for prompt and responsive customer service. In an earlier innovation that has been preserved with the new Call Center, DCSE's Home Office Customer Services Unit established a national toll-free telephone number in 2002, dedicated to employer inquiries. The dedicated line has proven to be a vital tool in the implementation of the National Medical Support Notice. Call Center workers who now respond on this line continue our policy of encouraging employers to consider electronic transmission of child support deductions to DCSE.



# Virginia Child Support Enforcement Program

## Legal ~

- The Virginia Attorney General appoints 47 full-time attorneys located across the state to represent DCSE—including providing legal advice to the agency.
- Last year, Assistant Attorneys General appeared for juvenile and circuit court proceedings in all jurisdictions of the state and represented DCSE in 125,696 hearings.
- These attorneys assisted DCSE in collecting a record \$11.2 million in lump sum child support payments—many when jailed noncustodial parents purged themselves of civil contempt to secure their release.
- The attorneys also assisted DCSE in obtaining new court orders for child support totaling \$1.3 million each month.



## Positive Projects ~

- In 2007 the DCSE Lynchburg District Office established an early intervention project which was designed to positively influence the initial interactions with new noncustodial parents (NCPs) to effect on-going child support for the child(ren) in the case. DCSE believed the project would show that immediate, personal, and intense contact with NCPs is a positive addition to other successful methods already in use by DCSE. Early results indicate NCPs who are not regularly employed are making more of an effort to pay, even when they are unable to pay the entire amount. The project has also shown that NCP make repeated calls to a direct telephone line provided to them for the assigned caseworker. These results augur well for all parties involved and, most importantly, the children to whom the support is owed.



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•Virginia, Community Mediation Center of Southeast Virginia and Peaceful Alternatives of Amherst. These organizations provide effective, low-cost programs that are available in all areas of the state. The program, serving over 9,000 custodial and noncustodial parents a year, is intended to increase the time that noncustodial parents spend with their children as well as provide many other services, including: mediation, parent education, development of parenting plans, and supervised visitation. Research shows that children benefit from positive relationships with both parents resulting in better school performance with fewer problems, lower chances of suspension, expulsion from or dropping out of school, and decreased likelihood of risky behaviors including use of drugs and alcohol and early sexual involvement.

•The Right Track Project was a three-year federally funded grant project which operated in six localities across the state and concluded in 2007. The project was a two-phase effort to explore the effect of early intervention strategies for low income NCPs who have new child support obligations, along with early intervention. Another goal of the program was to discover and develop more effective ways to work with NCPs to stem their accrual of arrearages, and strive for reliable payments and voluntary compliance. Customer-service oriented case managers jointly determined potential problem areas that may prevent NCPs from paying regular support, and free services were offered to address potential problems. The project's use of intensive case monitoring resulted in payments that were eight percent higher in the treatment group than in the control group (who had no early intervention and were offered no services).

